

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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MID-HUDSON COALITION AWARDED \$150,000 FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$150,000 to Ulster County to supplement a previous Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot grant. Ulster County applied for the grant on behalf of the Mid-Hudson Land Revitalization Partnership, a coalition of communities in the mid-Hudson Valley established in 1998.

"The Mid-Hudson Land Revitalization Partnership has been doing a great job of coordinating the brownfields redevelopment effort in the Hudson Valley," said Hinchey. "Taking a regional approach to brownfields is the smartest way to go about it.

"The new funding will allow the Partnership to build on the good work done so far. It will be a big help to economic development in the region. Removing environmental concerns from old industrial sites is a great incentive for responsible development."

Brownfields are moderately contaminated sites, typically in urban areas, where redevelopment is complicated by environmental contamination. It is estimated that there are 450,000 brownfields sites nationwide.

The Mid-Hudson Land Revitalization Partnership includes Ulster County, Orange County, and the cities of Beacon, Kingston, Middletown, Poughkeepsie, Port Jervis and Newburgh. Through the original pilot program, funded by a \$200,000 grant from EPA, the Partnership identified 184 potential sites and conducted 44 Phase I environmental assessments covering 83 individual tax parcels. The new funding will allow Phase II assessments to be conducted at sites that require further testing.

EPA initiated a program to address brownfields and awarded the first brownfields assessment grant in 1993. By the end of fiscal year 2000, the agency had made grants to 362 communities. In January 2002 a new law authorized Congress to spend \$250 million a year from 2002 through 2006. The law also clarifies liability issues associated with brownfields and removes significant barriers to participation.

Earlier this month, Hinchey took EPA officials on a tour of the Kingston waterfront to demonstrate the need for brownfields funding.